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January 3, 2000

Donna Shalala, Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Shalala:

I am writing to express my concern about the possible weakening of labeling requirements for irradiated food that is being considered by the Food and Drug Administration. I strongly believe that it is my right to know if the food I eat has been treated with radiation.

Food products undergo chemical changes after exposure to radioactive isotopes. These cosmetic and nutritional changes in foods warrant disclosure on a prominent place on the package. In addition, food that is not packaged (such as fresh produce) should be accompanied by a poster in plain view to be truthful and not misleading to the customer. Only clear, honest and permanent labeling is acceptable for irradiated foods.

I hope that you will defend the consumer's right to know in this important decision-making process.

This is especially important to me as a chef-instructor at the local college. I would like to be kept informed on this legislation as I will include such material in my classes.

Very truly yours,



Ms. Laurel Leslie
(808) 254-1990

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